

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 20-22, 26-32, 37, 40-53 are presented for consideration. Claims 20, 26-31, 37, 40-42, 46, 48-50 and 52 are independent. Claims 20, 26-31, 37, 40-42, 44, 46, 48 and 49 have been amended to clarify features of the subject invention, while claims 50-53 have been added to recite additional features of the subject invention. Support for these changes and claims can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claims 20-22, 26-32, 37, 40-42 and 44-49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. The Examiner asserted that the subject matter of these claims was not adequately described in the subject application. In more detail, the Examiner noted that page 9, lines 19-21, of the subject disclosure discusses a second supplier that supplies either pure oxygen or clean air that contains oxygen. The Examiner then surmised that the originally filed specification did not adequately disclose that all gases containing oxygen may be used as the gas supplied by the second supplier. These contentions are respectfully traversed. Specifically, Applicants submit that the recitation of the second supplier supplying a gas containing at least oxygen was, in fact, supported by the original disclosure, and at least by the passage noted by the Examiner. In this regard, Applicants were careful to discuss supplying of oxygen and supplying of air, which contains oxygen, and that the air was to contain oxygen unless explicitly stated otherwise. For

these reasons, Applicants submit that the prior recitation to the second supplier supplying a gas containing at least oxygen was supported by the original disclosure. Accordingly, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, should be withdrawn on this basis.

Nevertheless, to expedite allowance of the subject application, Applicants have amended the independent claims to set forth that the second supplier supplies a gas, containing oxygen. Applicants submit that this phrase likewise is clearly supported by the original disclosure. Accordingly, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, should be withdrawn on this basis as well.

Applicants note that no art has been applied against the previously-pending claims, namely claims 20-22, 26-32, 37, 40-42 and 44-49. Accordingly, Applicants submit that these claims should be deemed allowable. In addition to these claims being allowable, Applicants submit that new claims 50-53 patentably define features of the subject invention. Notably, independent claims 50 and 52 have been patterned after certain ones of the allowable claims discussed above, with independent claim 50 reciting, among other features, a second supplier, which supplies a gas, containing oxygen, into a closed space, and claim 52 reciting, among other features, a second supplier, which supplies air into a closed space. Applicants submit, therefore, that the features of the exposure apparatus, which include an arrangement of an optical system, a first supplier and a second supplier, as recited in independent claims 50 and 52, likewise should be deemed allowable over the cited art.

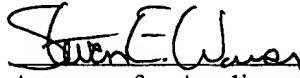
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the present invention, as recited in independent claims 20, 26-31, 37, 40-42, 46, 48-50 and 52, is patentably defined.

Dependent claims 21, 22, 32, 43-45, 47, 51 and 53 also should be deemed allowable, in their own right, for defining other patentable features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Further individual consideration of these dependent claims is requested.

Applicants further submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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